



OPPOSE THE FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT

The Constitution of the United States is our nation's most important document.

It should not be changed in the heat of a political campaign. It should not be changed in response to any ideology or political issue that captures the mood of the moment. If, in the past, this nation had yielded to such temptation our Constitution would not be the beacon for freedom that it currently represents around the world.

We come together as Americans, representing all parties, ideologies and religious beliefs, to oppose placing the Federal Marriage Amendment in the Constitution of the United States.

Some of us do not support the right of gays and lesbians to get married. Some of us support the right of gays and lesbians to be married and believe it is a civil issue of equality and not one of religious belief.

All of us are united in a deep belief that there should be no rush to judgment on changing the Constitution of the United States.

America has been blessed with a document that has been a model for oppressed people around the world - a document that has gained strength and legitimacy over time.

In difficult times, this document has protected the minority from the political will of the majority.

We urge Congress to reject this amendment in the name of all that is good about the American experience, our history and our freedom.

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Clarence Avant

Dr. Randall Bailey

Archbishop Carl Bean

Dr. Mary Francis Berry

Rev. Kevin Brown

Rev. Gilbert Caldwell

Bishop Rainey Cheeks

Rep. John Conyers

Rev. Kelly Brown Douglass

Dr. Michael E. Dyson

& Min. Marcia Dyson

Rev. James Forbes

Rev. Wanda Floyd

Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder

Rev. Peter Gomes

Alice Huffman

Dr. Alvin Jackson

Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.

Rev. Carol Johnson

Ron Kirk

Rev. James Lawson

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

Rev. Susan Newman

Rev. Dr. Kathi Martin

Rev. Irene Monroe

Archbishop Timothy Paul

Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel

Russell Simmons

Rev. William Sinkford

Rev. Cecil Williams



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**AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS ANNOUNCE OPPOSITION TO
FEDERAL MARRIAGE AMENDMENT IN PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE AD**
*Ad Running in Prominent African American Paper During NAACP Conference
Urges Congress to Reject Unnecessary and Discriminatory Amendment*

Philadelphia, PA – A group of prominent African American leaders from across the country today announced their opposition to the unnecessary Federal Marriage Amendment (FMA). The group of religious, political and civil rights leaders are featured in an ad in today's Philadelphia Tribune, a leading African American news publication. The ad is running during the 95th annual conference of the NAACP where thousands of leaders are in attendance.

"The Constitution of the United States is our nation's most important document and we must not allow it to fall victim to politically motivated changes," said Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. "This amendment would write discrimination into the Constitution which will put the rights of all American citizens at risk."

In the past, amendments to the Constitution have always expanded the rights and liberties of Americans except once. Over the past 213 years, there have only been 17 amendments to the Constitution including the abolishment of slavery and extending voting rights to women and African Americans.

"We urge Congress to reject the FMA because it would be the first time the Constitution was used to limit the rights of a group of Americans except in the case of prohibition," said Rep. John Conyers. "We also oppose the FMA because it is completely unnecessary and would be duplicative of existing federal laws that already define marriage as between a man and a woman."

The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1996, already bans federal recognition of gay marriages. DOMA also insures that states do not have to recognize gay marriages performed in other states.

Included in the group announcing their opposition to the FMA and featured in the ad are:

Clarence Avant, Chairman, Interior Music Publishing
Dr. Randall Bailey, Professor of Hebrew Bible, Interdenominational Theological Seminary Center, Atlanta, GA
Archbishop Carl Bean, Unity Fellowship Denomination, Los Angeles, CA
Dr. Mary Francis Berry, Co-Chair, US Commission on Civil Rights
Rev. Kevin Brown, Freedom Fellowship Christian Church, Washington DC
Rev. Gilbert Caldwell, United Methodist Church, Denver, CO
Bishop Rainey Cheeks, Inner Light Ministries, Washington, DC
Rep. John Conyers, (D-MI)
Rev. Kelly Brown Douglass, Professor of Religion, Goucher College, Germantown, MD
Dr. Michael E. Dyson, African American Studies, University of Pennsylvania
Min. Marcia Dyson, University of Pennsylvania
Rev. James Forbes, Riverside Church, New York, NY
Rev. Wanda Floyd, Imani Temple MCC, Durham, NC
Rev. Dr. Yvette Flunder, City of Refuge, San Francisco, CA
Rev. Peter Gomes, Harvard Divinity School Chaplain, Cambridge, MA

Alice Huffman, President, California NAACP
Dr. Alvin Jackson, National City Christian Church, Washington, DC
Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL)
Rev. Carol Johnson
Ron Kirk, Former Mayor of Dallas
Rev. James Lawson, United Methodist Church, Civil Rights Leader, Los Angeles, CA
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
Rev. Dr. Kathi Martin, God, Self and Neighbors Church, Atlanta, GA
Rev. Irene Monroe, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, MA
Rev. Susan Newman, Washington, DC
Archbishop Timothy Paul, President, World's Bishop Conference, Springfield, MA
Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel, Victory Church, Atlanta, GA
Russell Simmons, President and CEO, Rush Communications
Rev. William Sinkford, Unitarian Universalist Church, Boston, MA
Rev. Cecil Williams, Glide Memorial Methodist Church, San Francisco, CA

These prominent African American leaders are joined by a diverse group of national leaders from across the political spectrum who also oppose the FMA including conservative columnist George Will and Coretta Scott King. Nationally elected officials who oppose this amendment include Republican Senator Chuck Hagel, Democratic Congressman John Lewis and even former Republican Congressman Bob Barr, the author of DOMA, opposes the FMA.

The Campaign to Protect the Constitution (CPC) is a national, broad-based effort to stop the passage of the FMA. For more information on the Campaign to Protect the Constitution visit our website at www.campaigntoprotect.org.